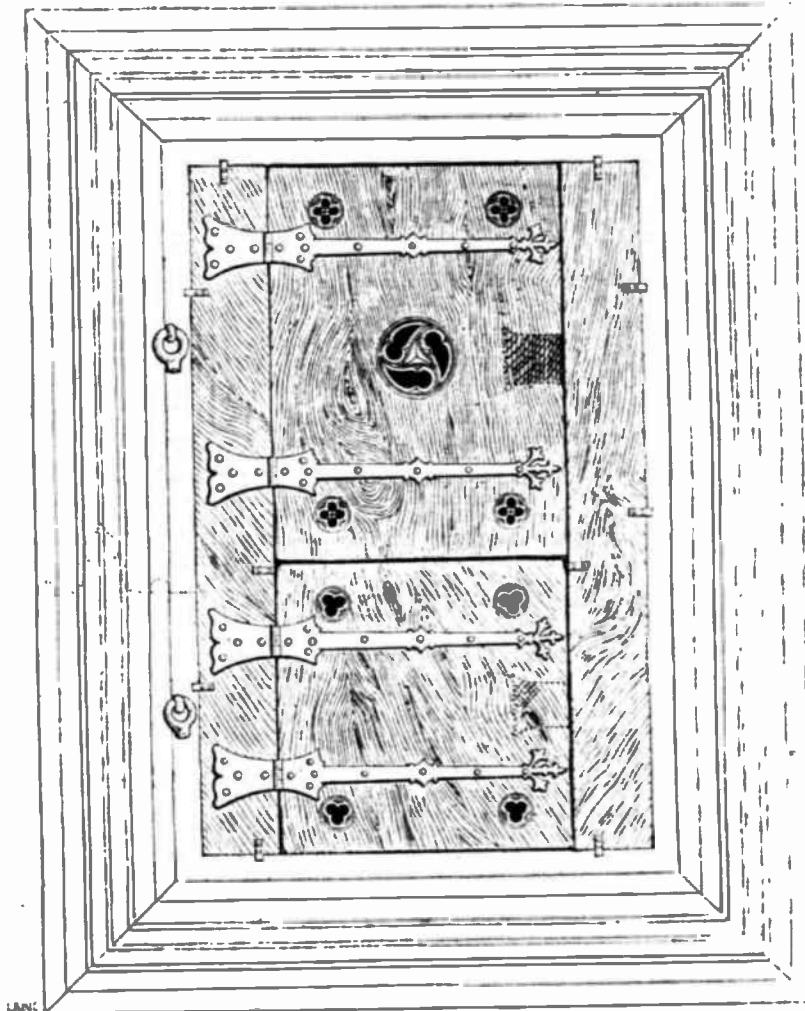


AUMBRY IN COLOGNE CATHEDRAL.



AUMBRY IN COLOGNE CATHEDRAL.

THE accompanying engraving represents an aumbry in the south aisle of nave of the cathedral of Cologne. There are three in this aisle, but only one with the doors and iron-work remaining. It is remarkable both for its having two doors (that is, one for each shelf), and also for the quatrefoils and trefoils, with which they are perforated. The locks are gone, as are the iron bars which reached across each door.

Few aumbries, either on the continent or in this country, have not been despoiled of their doors; this is the more to be regretted, as much greater care and attention appears to have been bestowed on them than on the aumbry itself.

G. T.

PUBLIC SAFETY.

THE FAILURE IN NEW OXFORD STREET.

SIR,—My attention having been drawn to a paragraph in *THE BUILDER* of last Saturday, headed "Public Safety," in which the conduct of all the officers appointed under the Metropolitan Buildings Act is impeached, in reference to certain buildings in New Oxford-street, described as now being taken down in consequence of their defective construction, and such impeachment of neglect being without foundation, I trust you will give me an opportunity, through the pages of your journal, of stating what the facts of the case really are.

The works were commenced in September, 1845; and, at that time, the drawings approved on the part of the crown being shown to me,

the great height to which the buildings were intended to be carried, and their ponderous projections, attracted my observation. As regards the former, I had no right to interfere at all, so long as the prescribed thickness of the walls was maintained; nor as to the latter, unless the projections became from any cause dangerous to the public, or overhung the public way. I did, however, make several suggestions to the builder on both these heads, and pointed out the propriety of applying to the Commissioners of Woods, Works, &c., for permission to alter the design. I had no power to do more. I was always assured, as to the projections, that they would be secured by the superincumbent weight placed upon them, or in some other efficient manner; and when it became obvious they were not so secured, I interfered successfully, for the objectionable parts are now in course of removal.

Undoubtedly some delay took place in my proceedings, but this was owing in the first instance to a severe accident the builder met with, which caused his death, and subsequently to the difficulty that arose in winding up his affairs and disposing of the property. Directly it was sold, I put myself in communication with the purchaser's surveyor, Mr. Thompson; and it is due to that gentleman to state that he anticipated my suggestions, and rendered any application to the official referees unnecessary, by securing and subsequently removing the objectionable parts.

I think it right to add, that the failure in the upper part of the building, and the consequent necessity for re-constructing a portion, arose not alone from the projection of the cornice, but was caused in a great measure by the

defective construction of the roof. For this defective construction I am not responsible, nor could any of the officers under the Act exercise a controlling power over the design, or interfere at all with it until some danger was caused to the public.

As regards the comment in the paragraph in question, on the conduct of the Registrar and Official Referees, it cannot be necessary that I should state to you, Mr. Editor, or to any person acquainted with the provisions of the Act, that these officers could have nothing to do with the matter,—that I alone was responsible, and that whatever proceedings it might have been necessary to institute, must have emanated from me. I believe in this case I did take all such proceedings as were necessary to protect the public; and the restoration of the defective parts, coupled with my refusal, up to this time, to certify that the buildings have been properly completed, is the most conclusive evidence I can offer of the fact.—I am, Sir, &c.

GEORGE POWNALL,
District Surveyor, St. Giles-in-the-Fields,
and St. George, Bloomsbury.

7, Bedford-row, Nov. 16, 1846.

On consideration, Mr. Pownall will see, that his statement, which we insert with much pleasure, in no way impeaches the propriety and intention of the inquiry we made last week. Some remarks in our leading article of to-day will apply.

ROMAN CEMENT STONE IN SCOTLAND.—A stratum of stone fit for Roman cement has been discovered at Newfield, in the parish of Blantyre, Lanarkshire.